

# The Bethel Courier.

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 2

SUMMER 1991

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 19TH CENTURY MEDICINE IN

### BETHEL, MAINE

by Joyce Wanger

#### Part IV

In 1843, Dr. Twitchell returned to his home town of Bethel with his new wife, Phebe Buxton of N. Yarmouth, and moved into their newly constructed Greek Revival home on Church Street. The doctor soon developed an extensive and lucrative practice. The same humor that had won him friends as a student helped establish him as one of the most popular physicians of the area and a reputation as one of the most popular men in town. His practice allowed him time for community involvement that ranged from temperance lectures to organization of the Republican Party in Oxford County. This full and productive life ended for Dr. Twitchell in October of 1859 after sixteen successful years of practice in Bethel. His death was thought due to the combined effects of a "low form" of typhoid fever and chronic complaints including "pneumatic and neuralgic difficulties" and "difficulty in the stomach and liver." His last request was to visit with his close personal friend, Dr. T. H. Brown of Paris. Dr. Brown was another of Maine's scholarly physicians in the mid-nineteenth century. Judging from the company he kept, Almon Twitchell was quite well respected in the medical community of western Maine. Dr. True related that,

"... near the close of a calm October day, the last of all that remained of our friend was taken in charge by the medical fraternity of this and the adjoining towns and carried away to the Pine Hill Cemetery . . . the silence everywhere . . . in perfect keeping with the feelings of a mourning community."

There is no evidence that Almon Twitchell was a member of the medical societies in which his friends were so active. In this regard he is representative of the other Bethel physicians of the century. Of course, Dr. Carter had died before a lasting society had formed in Maine in 1853, and Dr. Mason had left active practice by that date. In defense of the others, medical societies of the early and mid-nineteenth century attracted only small numbers of physicians and their objectives of raising the standards of medical education and improving medical practice were largely unsuccessful. Dues were often unpaid, rules were ignored, and some societies lapsed into long periods of inactivity. Since travel to state meetings could consume large blocks of time, it is easy to see how such membership could be considered dispensable. Several of Bethel's physicians chose instead to invest their time in a more local social reform movement, the temperance cause.

It is possible that Bethel was visited by lecturers and

*(continued on page 2)*



In the photo above, fifty years ago this year, the pipeline is laid in the Bethel area. During the summer of 1941, Standard Oil of New Jersey established the Portland Pipeline Company and the Montreal Pipeline Limited to build a 236 mile twelve inch petroleum pipeline from South Portland to Montreal. Beginning in June 1941, the Bethel CITIZEN carried articles on the progress of this enterprise, detailing the difficulties of laying pipe across rocky and hilly terrain (from a low of 32 feet above sea level at South Portland to 1960 feet at Tug Mountain, Vermont). Survey crews were assisted by aerial photographers in laying out the right-of-way from Maine to Quebec. The pipeline companies acquired hundreds of easements from a variety of landowners.

Employing 250 men, the project cost \$8 million and required 32,700 tons of pipe. Oklahoma Construction Company of Dallas, TX built the line while other contractors were involved in building the pumping stations along the way as well as worker housing.

Just as in the case of railroads in the 19th century, Portland assumed importance in the 20th as Montreal's winter port. Building a pipeline at South Portland would cut out the 2000 mile trip around Cape Breton Island and the Gaspe Peninsula down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. This savings allowed tankers to do other essential wartime work.

The pipeline was important for the war effort, but also prospered in the post-war years when an eighteen inch pipe was added in 1950; in 1965 a twenty four inch line was laid so that capacity increased from the wartime level of 60,000 to over 400,000 barrels per day.

proponents of many social reform movements of the 1830s and 1840s including those that advocated maintaining health by staying away from physicians. Their philosophy of bathing, exercise, and a healthy diet is reflected in books like that of a Dr. Cole who urged the public to, "... avail [themselves] of Nature's health-insurance policy — for Nature always goes for health and long life." Dr. Cole, in 1851, claimed his book was so popular that in three years it went through twenty five editions. Regardless of what impact such movements had on the community of Bethel, when an illness struck, and home remedies proved ineffective, the doctor was called. This was especially so in cases that could become epidemic in nature.

The medically educated editor of the *Courier*, Dr. True, kept the community informed on such matters. In March of 1859 he printed a "Register of Deaths of Residents of Bethel Hill" for the previous eleven years. This statistical analysis gives us a glimpse of what Bethel's doctors collectively encountered in the community. Of the total 34 deaths, it is interesting that none of them were due to accident. Only 14 of the deaths have an attributable cause declared. These 14 deaths are rather evenly spread among the range of diseases from consumption to cancer that nineteenth century medicine recognized. Dr. True found it notable that consumption and typhoid fever had claimed only 3 and 2 deaths respectively. He added that the population of the village at that point was 575 persons.

These statistics for Bethel reflect the general condition in Maine for this time. The editor of the *Transactions* of the Maine Medical Association stated, "... Maine is one of the most healthy states in the Union ... a history of her epidemics ... show(s) that she has been wonderfully exempt from all those severe and malignant epidemics ... in our more southern states." Statistics, however, do not give the total picture. A more complete review of the epidemic experience in Bethel was given by Dr. Morton in the first annual report to the State Board of Health in 1886. This report attempts to establish the record for the entire century in Bethel. Since Dr. Morton had been in Bethel only since 1868 some of the early record was related to him by others. The three diseases mentioned in connection with epidemics are summarized below.

**Scarlet Fever:** In 1833, a "terrible" epidemic originated at Bethel Hill which affected nearly every family, killing sometimes two or more in the same household. For the eighteen months of Dr. Morton's tenure in Bethel (1868-1886) there were no more epidemics of scarlet fever.

**Diphtheria:** 1861-1862 brought a "severe epidemic" to the lower part of Bethel which was thought to have been imported from Boston. After that date only a few sporadic, mild cases occurred in Bethel.

**Typhoid Fever:** In the years 1826-1828, Dr. Morton reported on a particularly malignant and fatal epidemic of typhoid in the town of Newry, along the Bear River, that became known as the "Bear River Fever." This very fatal outbreak was thought at the time of its occurrence to have its origin in "atmospheric causes."

Bethel physicians cared for the sick of the surrounding communities which had no physician of their own. Bryant's Pond had a separate entry in the health department report with their own physician reviewing their epidemic history. His report called typhoid fever a rare disease there and

gave sketchy reports on scarlet fever and diphtheria epidemics in the last quarter of the century.

For the community of Hanover, fourteen miles to the east of Bethel, there exists a revealing series of letters reproduced in that town's history that vividly describe the devastating impact of an 1863-1864 diphtheria epidemic. The letters, sent to William B. Russell of Bethel from his relatives in Hanover, clearly express the suffering and anxiety an epidemic produced. (See Appendix III)

By the mid 1860s, the deaths of Doctors Twitchell, Grover and Mason, left epidemics and the other medical needs of the community in the care of Dr. Wiley. He was joined for a brief period by his son Dr. Philanthus C. Wiley, an 1864 graduate of Maine Medical School. His promising career was abruptly ended when his boat capsized in Umbagog Lake on his return from a housecall to a patient in the Magalloway region. Dr. P. C. Wiley drowned. Dr. P. C. Wiley, like more of the young generation of physicians, was a member of the Maine Medical Association.

Other physicians came to Bethel in the third quarter of the century including Joshua Fanning, Ozmon Twitchell, George Collins and Charles Hill. Dr. Hill is reported to have died of typhoid fever in the late 1880s after drinking water from the bedside of one of his patients. Few facts are known to most of these men and some of them stayed only briefly.

A mention of Dr. William Williamson seems appropriate in that his life comments on the educational and economic aspects of medicine in the nineteenth century. Dr. Williamson was born in Ireland and came to Bethel with his family at age 9 in 1821. In 1847, he graduated from the Maine Medical School and entered practice in Saco. After two years he returned to Bethel, entered into agriculture, and practiced medicine "... only when he could not avoid it." For someone like Dr. Williamson who found medicine not to his liking, the investment of time in education and the economic potential were not sufficient to inhibit him from becoming a farmer.

A discussion of Bethel's medical practice in the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century would not be complete without recognition of the fact that there were no female practitioners mentioned with the possible exception of Molly Ockett. Of course, Elizabeth Blackwell broke into this male-dominated field with her graduation from Geneva Medical College in 1849. Although her admission was largely accidental, she acquired her credential honestly and became the inspiration and example for other women at the height of the social reform era. Bethel was not a likely community to have been served by one of the pioneering women of medicine, most of whom served in northern cities. Few ever located in conservative rural areas. Most also affiliated with hospitals or limited their practice to obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics. The low population base and absence of hospitals in rural western Maine made such a practice impractical. Larger communities in Maine had female physicians as early as 1866 when Dr. Nancy Williams established her practice of Homeopathy at Augusta. Lewiston, Ellsworth, and Portland all had female physicians by 1872 who were well received by their colleagues as members of the Maine Medical Association in 1875.

In conclusion, the evidence of the various topics presented in this review suggests that Bethel was well supplied with able, well-educated physicians who reflected main-



stream medical practice of the early and mid-nineteenth century. The onset of the last quarter of the century, where this review ends, was also a turning point in medical history. Scientific discoveries of the late 1800s created a new form of medical practice that relied less and less on empiric treatment of symptoms and more on a true understanding of the pathophysiology of disease. The widespread use of antiseptics and the further development of anesthesia allowed the development of more sophisticated surgical technology that moved medicine more toward utilization of hospitals. By the mid-twentieth century, the development of antibiotics resulted from the discoveries being made in the late 1880s and 1890s in the field of bacteriology. Antibiotics for the first time enabled physicians to effectively treat infection. Since then scientific advances have mushroomed to such a degree that nineteenth century physicians might find twentieth century medicine's realities more unbelievable than those of any medicine show montebank.

### REFLECTIONS OF A HALF CENTURY (continued from the last issue)

by Leslie E. Davis

The first model A Ford to be delivered in Bethel was sold to Henry Flint, and Marie and I went to the Ford assembly plant at Kearney, NJ in February 1929 and drove it to Bethel. It was a two door sedan. The second one was a business coupe, which was sold to Mollie Stanley; Arthur drove this one from the Ford, Cambridge, MA assembly plant. These were sold delivered in Bethel for \$585 for the two door sedan and \$675 for the business coupe.

Incidentally, I bought the same business coupe in 1936 or 1937 for \$35 in good running condition. That was the trade-in allowance the garage gave her for it and we used it up on the Rapid River, Umbagog Lake logging job to haul supplies up the lake on the ice.

In the spring of 1929, Arthur Herrick proposed that it might be a good idea to dissolve our partnership and one of us buy the other's interest in the garage business. We discussed the matter quite frankly and came to the conclusion that a separation of our partnership would probably work out better for both of us.

### EDITOR'S CORNER

Instead of the regular Member Profile column that is usually included in each issue of the COURIER, I would like to pay tribute to three members whose deaths are noted elsewhere in this issue. Ruth Verville was long a member of the Society's Museum Committee and served several seasons as a guide in the museum. I always enjoyed talking with Ruth and will miss her pleasant and gracious personality. Grace Buck was for many years active in the Society's craft program demonstrating huck weaving. Her courage and good humor were inspirations to all who knew her. Mary Chadbourne was a guide in the museum during its early years whose service was cut short by her declining health. All three of the above members were valued volunteers who made a difference. SRH

### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The forthcoming illustrated history of Bethel is expected later this fall. The 457 illustrations/photos are some of the best available, chosen by the author, the Society's Publications Committee and others from thousands of possibilities. This is, however, more than a "picture book." The captions contain a wealth of information and detail about the photos. Over two hundred years of events and developments are covered in the nine chapters of the text. It is exciting to have this book one hundred years after W. B. Lapham's HISTORY OF BETHEL. The changes of the 20th century have now been detailed for the first time since Society Director Stanley Howe's essay which appeared in the 1981 reprint of Lapham's history. This is a great way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Society's existence. The generous 25% pre-publication discount will soon be over. Place your order today to take advantage of this special offer.

Jane W. Hosterman

We made an appraisal of the business and agreed that a figure around \$16,250 was a fair value of the business, and that either would be satisfied to sell out his interest at one half that figure. On this basis I sold out to him on April 1, 1929 and agreed to stay and work as a mechanic at \$35 a week until October 1, which I did. From October on, I went full time into the lumber and pulpwood business.

One of the first things I did was to put in more electric power in the sawmill and add a good edger and some trimming equipment.

The first woodlot I bought was from Guy Swan; it was part of the Williamson farm at Middle Intervale, about 35 acres for \$600 in 1928 or 1929. The second one was about 365 acres on the road to Chandler Hill from Rufus Virgin for about \$10,000 in the fall of 1929.

Probably I should leave my business transactions for awhile and bring my family affairs up to date.

In the late summer of 1927, Marie's mother was not able to do her housework where they were living on High Street in Bethel, so we moved her father and mother down to the farm with us. Her mother was not really well again. She died in May 1928. Her father was also not able to do much work, and for the next few years was afflicted with a number of small cancers beginning with one on his heel, and in later years they showed up on his legs and body. He did help with the farm chores (as I had bought a cow), and later had two or three cows and a pair of horses. He lived with us until September 1934 when he died. The cancers gave him alot of pain and in the last year or two he had a slight shock which bothered his talking some. It was Marie who took care of him through these years.

Marie had her troubles also during these years. She lost two babies by miscarriages and the last one which was in the spring of 1928 or 1929 was pretty serious. She developed phlebitis in one leg and came near not pulling out of it.

We had Sherman Davis with us during three summers. I believe one of those was in 1926 when we lived on High Street, and I remember one of them was in 1927, the first

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## SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

(L.E. Davis Memoirs continued from page 3)

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. These may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents should include 6% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should include \$3 for postage and handling.

Moses Mason House Tile	\$3.50
Stationery(package of ten sheets and ten envelopes)	\$2 ea.

Moses Mason House	Bethel Railroad Station
Summer House	Bethel Covered Bridge

### Booklets

"Bethel's Broad Street"	75¢
"The Family Farm"	75¢
"Made in Bethel"	75¢
"Dr. Moses Mason and His House"	\$1
"Molly Ockett"	\$2

### Maps and Atlases

1880 Map of Bethel Hill	\$2
1880 Map of Entire Town (Bethel)	\$2
1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill	\$1
1858 Atlas of Oxford County	\$6.50

Tote Bag (Moses Mason Museum logo)	sm. \$7.50	lg. \$11.50
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Placemats, 4 Season (set of four)	\$7.50
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### Books

Carrie Wight, A HISTORY OF NEWRY	\$5
Heywood, HISTORY OF UPTON, MAINE	\$10
Hutchinson, THE RUMFORD FALLS & RANGELEY LAKES RAILROAD	\$20
BETHEL, MAINE CEMETERIES	\$9.50
Russell, INDIAN NEW ENGLAND BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER	\$15.95

R. Crosby, FROM AN OLD LEATHER TRUNK	\$5
W. B. Lapham, HISTORY OF WOODSTOCK, MAINE	\$19.95
M. Dibner, PORTRAIT OF PARIS HILL	\$29.50
King, THE WHITE HILLS	\$18

THE WHITE MOUNTAINS: PLACE & PERSPECTIVE	\$9.95
Holt, GRAND TRUNK LINES OF NEW ENGLAND	\$24.95
D.B. Wight, WILD RIVER WILDERNESS	\$4

Francis Parkman, THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY	\$7.50
MAINE IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC	\$29.95

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY COOKBOOK	\$5
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Thomas Hubka, BIG HOUSE, LITTLE HOUSE, BACK HOUSE BARN: THE CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS OF NEW ENGLAND	Paper \$22.95. Cloth \$35
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Bennett, BETHEL, MAINE: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY	\$39.95
M.F. King, ANNALS OF OXFORD	\$48

R. Crosby, I WAS A SUMMER BOARDER	\$5
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A TRUTHFUL LIKENESS: CHESTER HARDING AND HIS PORTRAITS	\$25
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Paula Wight, NEWRY PROFILES	\$5
Eva Bean, EAST BETHEL ROAD	\$50

R.H. Bennett, OXFORD COUNTY, MAINE	\$18
William B. Lapham, HISTORY OF BETHEL, 1768-1890	\$45

F.W. Kilbourne, CHRONICLES OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS	\$20
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### T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult) (S,M,L,XL)	\$7
Moses Mason Museum (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14)	\$6
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adult) (S,M,L,XL)	\$7
Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child's) (4-6-8-10-12-14)	\$6

### Post Cards: Dr. Mason, Agnes Mason,

Moses Mason House	10¢ ea.
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Bethel Historical Society Calendar, 1991	\$7
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Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totaling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. They will be sent by return mail.

year we lived on the Russell farm; I am not sure whether the third summer was in 1925 or 1928, but he was quite a problem for Marie to take care of. He had been a diabetic all his life since the age of 10 or 11. All his food had to be weighed and prepared specially under a very strict diet. We called on him at Gardner, MA, where he worked as a hotel engineer in March 1956. He managed to control his diabetic condition very well. He still had to have insulin daily, but could eat practically anything.

About the year 1930, Marie Dustin came to live with us. Marie Davis's brothers and sisters always called her "Aunt Marie" although she was really not related to the Swan family. The only connection was the fact that she was the widow of Owen Dustin whose mother took care of Marie's father when he was a young boy after both parents died. She had been working as a housekeeper at Buckfield and lost that job. (The man she kept house for got married again and didn't need her.) There didn't seem to be any other place for her to go as she had no relatives anywhere she knew of and no income, so we took her in. She lived with us two or three years until she was past seventy and then was able to get an Old Age Assistance Pension from the State on which, with some help from Guy and Marie, she lived in a room by herself in the same house where Guy lived in Bethel village.

Porter's boy, Eugene, by his first wife, also lived with us for awhile, after Porter married the second time, as they didn't seem to have room for him. I finally succeeded in getting Eugene a chauffeur's job with W. H. Hinman, which cleared up that problem.

About the year 1930, Marie and I took about the first vacation trip that we ever had up to that time since we were married. We drove by car up through Colebrook, NH and Beecher Falls, VT, to Three Rivers, Province of Quebec, crossed the St. Lawrence there and followed the St. Maurice River up to LaTuque, which was as far as the highway was built; we got into LaTuque about 8 in the evening and had quite a problem finding anyone who could speak English as this was a French Canadian town. We stayed there until about 4 the next morning and took a train 75 miles further north to Saumour where Charlie Swan (Guy's son) met us. Charlie was working under John Carter as a tractor driver and boatman for the Brown Company. We went with Charlie up the St. Maurice River 30 miles by motor boat, then took a motor lorry 20 miles more to the depot camp settlement at LaLoutre and stayed with John Carter's folks. Marie's father and Richard, who was 14 years old, went with us on this trip.

We took a boat trip up the lake about 60 miles to deliver some supplies to the Hudson Bay Company. The whole trip took about a week.

Marie's father died in 1934 at our house on the Middle Intervale road of internal cancers.

During the years from 1924 to 1925 and on, radio came into common use. The first sets were called crystal sets and were very crude. Then the vacuum tube sets came into use. With these, each person had to have a set of ear phones and sit close to the radio in order to hear any program. Even this type of radio cost around \$300 to \$400. At that time only a few people had them.

Within a year or two loud speakers were developed, which replaced ear phones but were separate from the

receiving set; following this, the progress was quite rapid to the present day type of radio with the speaker built into the cabinet and the reduction in the price.

My own mother died in the winter of 1923 of a cerebral hemorrhage at the farm in Newry. Father got along on the farm at Newry during the rest of that year and up until October 1924, part of the time doing his own housework and other times with various housekeepers. On the farm one needs somebody in the house who really takes an interest in keeping the work up, so in October 1924, he married Miss Frances Mayhew of Island Pond, VT, who was born in Canada. At that time she was (?) years old, and my father was 61 years old. The marriage worked out very well and she was a big help to him. It also gave a good home for her, and Bertha Rogers, her niece, who "Mother Frances" as we called her, brought up after Bertha's own mother died.

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The Society hosted the North East McBean Gathering on May 11. Organizers of the gathering were Stewart Bean, Maine Convener and Blaine Mills, New Hampshire Convener. Bethel was selected because of its geographic location and for the large number of Bean family members in the area.

### BOOK NOTE

**A HISTORY OF MAINE BUILT AUTOMOBILES 1834-1934.** By Richard and Nancy Fraser. (By the authors, 1991.) Pp. 246. Paper. \$26.50. Cloth \$37. Available from the authors, P.O. Box 39, East Poland, ME 04230.

For years Dick Fraser has been visiting the Society and talking about his book on Maine-made automobiles. At last it has appeared and the wait has proven worthwhile. There is virtually nothing like this book and for those interested in technology, old autos, or the like, it is a "must" book.

Dick Fraser has been an old car "buff" since he was a teenager in Bethel and the book reflects his lifelong enthusiasm. His wife has helped him in this labor of love and it is possible to learn a great deal about Maine's role in America's infatuation with the auto from this book. Profusely illustrated, it traces the development of various automobiles made in Maine largely through newspaper

articles of the period and promotional materials for these products. Many of the photos are from the author's extensive collection.

In addition, the book also includes copies of regulations against automobiles that were enacted during the early years of the 20th century and a useful history of Maine license plates.

Dick and Nancy Fraser have made a contribution to Maine history that will be consulted regularly by those interested in this topic for years to come.

S.R.H.

### AUSTIN ASSOCIATES, P.A. Certified Public Accountants BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATEMENTS OF INCOME AND EXPENSES DECEMBER 31, 1990 and 1989

	1990		1989	
	Amount	Percent of Income	Percent of Income	Amount
<b>INCOME:</b>				
Elderhostel	\$ 636	\$ .96	\$ .00	\$ -0-
Grants	20,000	30.21	8.24	4,998
General contributions	9,349	14.12	16.33	9,903
Dues	5,348	8.08	7.76	4,707
Admission and sales income	5,990	9.05	11.58	7,025
Program income	-0-	.00	(.71)	(431)
Rental income	611	.92	.96	583
Investment income	31,147	47.05	57.98	35,161
Loss on sale of securities	(6,880)	(10.39)	(7.71)	(4,678)
Unrealized gain on market recovery of securities	-0-	.00	5.57	3,380
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>66,201</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>60,648</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>				
Bank charges	121	.18	.00	-0-
Bookkeeping exp.	1,200	1.81	1.98	1,200
Building repairs	460	.69	1.94	1,178
Depreciation	10,549	15.93	17.34	10,518
Director's expense	200	.30	.03	20
Dues	405	.61	.79	480
Grants	7,000	10.57	.00	-0-
Heat, lights and water	6,124	9.25	9.04	5,483
Insurance	3,994	6.03	6.22	3,771
Janitorial services	84	.13	1.00	606
Merchandise for resale	6,705	10.13	8.14	4,934
Miscellaneous	1,784	2.70	1.27	769
Office supplies and printing	3,900	5.89	7.33	4,447
Postage	1,235	1.87	2.27	1,379
Professional fees	1,150	1.74	1.76	1,070
Salaries	22,120	33.42	35.11	21,291
Subscriptions	40	.06	.10	60
Supplies	126	.19	.27	161
Taxes	2,267	3.43	3.38	2,048
Telephone	432	.65	.58	355
	<b>68,896</b>	<b>105.58</b>	<b>98.55</b>	<b>59,770</b>
<b>NET INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>\$(3,695)</b>	<b>(5.58)</b>	<b>1.45</b>	<b>\$ 878</b>





*The large oak beside the Dr. Moses Mason House shown above was removed in June (see below) because of its diseased condition. In the bottom photo Fred Burk of Sunday River Tree Service makes the final cut to topple the trunk. Over 150 rings were counted at the stump indicating the tree dated back to Dr. Mason's day. Mr. Burk has generously donated his services to plant another oak later in the year.*



*Bethel Common and Prospect Hotel, ca. 1904*

### **SOCIETY PUBLISHES ILLUSTRATED HISTORY**

In celebration of the Society's 25th anniversary, the long-awaited book, *BETHEL, MAINE: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY* by Randall H. Bennett, Curator of Collections, will make its appearance late in 1991. Two hundred fifty-six pages in length, this 8½ x 11 inch volume will feature a text and 457 illustrations detailing Bethel's history from the earliest days to the present. Printed on acid-free paper with a sewn binding, this quality paperback should be a treasured heirloom for years to come.

In the photo above, one of many historical photos included in the book, is the historic Prospect Hotel following an extensive modernization in 1901-02. Until the appearance of the book, those interested can take advantage of a pre-publication offer (included in the last *COURIER*) of \$10 off the list price of \$39.95 plus applicable tax and shipping.

### **MATTHEW O'MEARA WINS DR. MOSES MASON AWARD**

Winner of the Dr. Moses Mason Award for 1991 was Matthew O'Meara, a member of the Class of 1992 at Telstar Regional High School. His essay on Dr. Raymond R. Tibbetts, longtime Bethel physician, was selected by judges Rosalind Chapman, Marvin Ouwinga and Edmond Vachon as the best of those submitted for this year's contest. The Dr. Moses Mason Award is given each year to the Gould Academy or Telstar Regional High School student who writes the best essay in local history. The award consists of a certificate of commendation and a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond. President Jane Hosterman presented the award to O'Meara at the annual awards ceremony at Telstar Regional High School in June.

### **NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

William D. and Madeleine Hall Quimby, Gainesville, FL  
Robert L. and Pauline P. Davis, Bethel  
Olive Grover Ferguson, Exeter, NH  
Richard O. Hathaway, Montpelier, VT  
Donald O. Johnston, Las Vegas, NV  
C. Custer and Wilma Hall Quimby, Raymond, NH

After purchasing the Virgin lots in 1929, I went into the lumber and pulpwood business as heavily as I could manage the financing. I built a second sawmill on the road Chandler Hill about 1/2 mile from the main highway at the foot of Blake Hill, and built about a mile of pole line to carry electric current to this mill. I did not, however, buy new machinery for this mill, but moved the machinery from the sawmill on the homestead farm each fall and spring. We sawed during the winter at the Chandler Hill road location and in the summer at the mill on the homestead farm, thus keeping the same crews busy.

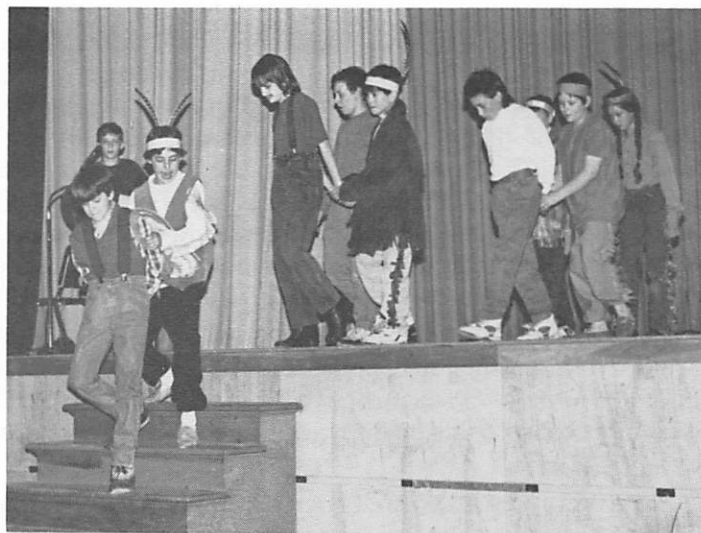
At the Chandler Hill location we also built a set of logging camps large enough to take care of about twenty woodsmen, which was about the size crew it took to cut logs and pulpwood on those lots.

In 1929 and 1930 we landed the pulpwood, both rough and peeled, on the banks of Beaver Brook (called Chandler Brook on the U.S. Topographical map) during the winters and in the spring when the water was at flood stage from melting snow, we put it into the water and drove it to Alder River and down Alder River to join the big main pulpwood drive on the Androscoggin River. In 1930 we landed about 250 cords of pulpwood along the banks of Beaver Brook north of the highway from Bethel to Locke Mills and built a small driving dam at the point where the brook passes under the road, in order to control the flow of water and help float the wood to the river.

This project was the farthest upstream that wood was ever floated on that brook.

About the year 1931 or 1932 was the end of pulpwood driving in the small streams as the trend was to trucking the pulpwood directly to the mills. One big factor in the change was the improvement in capacity and economy of small trucks, particularly Fords and Chevrolets, and the year-round use of trucks after the snow removal program spread all over the State in 1927, 1928, and 1929.

Pulpwood was a better business in those years than it has ever been since. Peeled pulpwood could be cut,



*Fifth grade students of Miss Newcomb's Crescent Park School social studies class presented a pageant on Bethel's past which they wrote and produced for the Society's May monthly meeting. In the photo above students depict the Indian Raid of 1781. This activity was the culminating event of a series of presentations and programs sponsored and presented by the Society throughout the school year. Photo courtesy of Donald S. Brown.*

peeled, sawed and piled for \$4 per cord; it cost about \$1 to \$1.50 per cord to have it hauled and piled on the brook and about 75¢ per cord to drive it to delivery on the main river for a total cost of about \$6.25 per cord. We received \$10.50 per cord for hardwood and hemlock, and \$12.50 per cord for spruce and fir making a net stumpage yield of over \$4 to \$6 per cord.

At the mill we sawed the pine into finish lumber, the hemlock into dimension lumber for building. Oak was sawed into dimension timbers and shipped to Boston to be used in shipbuilding and other hardwood was sawed into railroad ties and shipped to Nashua, NH for creosote treatment.

(continued on next page)

**Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past.**

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) free admission to the museum            | (5) quarterly publication                    |
| (2) special discounts at museum store       | (6) reduced course fees                      |
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..... Students (under 18 years) \$2

..... Senior (over 55 years) \$3

..... Life over 55 years \$50 single

..... Life over 55 years \$75 couple

..... Life under 55 years \$100 single

..... Life under 55 years \$150 couple

..... Individual preference (any amount over \$5)

..... Corporate \$50

(L.E. Davis Memoirs continued from page 7)

In 1931, we built a short wood mill and sawed the white and yellow birch into spool bars and dowel squares. We bought our first tractor for use on this operation on the Chandler Hill Road. It was a Catapillar Model 20 and I bought it for \$1300 on time payments of \$100 per month and it proved to be an excellent investment, although compared to present-day tractors it would not show up too favorably.

From the time Richard was 13 or 14 years old, he worked around the sawmill or woods; as soon as he was old enough for a driver's license at 15 years he drove trucks during practically all of his vacation time from school work.

In the spring of 1930 the Brown Company at Berlin, NH started buying the first green rough hardwood pulp that any of the paper mills would take and they offered \$11 per cord delivered in Berlin for it. It looked like a good deal and I contracted for 500 cords. We got the wood out and sawed for \$2.75 per cord and yarded to truck landing for \$1.25 per cord, and trucking costs ran from \$2.50 to \$3 per cord, which gave us a good stumpage yield for that type of wood. One more thing we did during this period should probably be put in this story.

The collection of taxes in Bethel was put up for bids at the annual Town Meeting each year and Fred Hall was the collector. He was unable to continue in this job, so at the following annual meeting I put in my bid for this office, and it was accepted.

#### SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

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*Published quarterly by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all comments and inquiries to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Publications, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.*

ISSN 0749-9108

I cannot recall from memory and do not have the records available, but I think that I was Tax Collector of Bethel for 8 or 10 years in all (Editor's note: According to the Bethel Town Reports he was tax collector from 1928-33.) I took the job as an extra money job, and Marie helped me a great deal with it; in fact, she probably did more than half the detail work. We got around \$600 to \$800 per year out of it, from which we had to pay our cost of printing bills, postage, travel expense etc., but we liked it and the extra money came in mighty handy.

*(to be continued in next issue)*

#### IN MEMORIAM

Died, May 21, 1991, Ruth Verville, Life Member  
Died, May 27, 1991, C. Custer Quimby, Life Member  
Died, May 28, 1991, Grace F. Buck, Sustaining Member  
Died, June 18, 1991, Mary Chadbourne, Life Member

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